

3

ADS: SELLING STYLE TO INSPIRE BRANDS

Ads can evoke emotions, challenge societal norms and convey important messages

4

DEVELOPMENT IN, COMPENSATION OUT!

Many businessmen lost their shops in 2012-13, without compensation money

10

CITY'S ICONIC GLOBAL EXPORT- BIRYANI

The best part is there is no sense of bitter competition amongst any of them

11

LS 2024: WELFARISM TOPS POLL AGENDA

Economic revival, social welfare, and national security emerge as focal points

PATRON

Prof (Dr.) Anil Tiwari, Dy Pro Vice-Chancellor

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Prof (Dr.) Sanjay M Johri, Director

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Dr. Bhavna Wal & Mohit Sharma

DESIGN EDITOR

Mohit Sharma

DESIGN & INFOGRAPHICS

Abhishek Singh

PRINTED & PUBLISHED BY

Prof (Dr.) Sanjay M. Johri for Amity School of
Communication, Amity University Lucknow Campus
(Internal Circulation Only)



Picture: SURESH SAHU

Groundwater Time to catch the rain

The Central Groundwater Board of India reckons that about 17% of groundwater blocks are overexploited.

Time to catch the rain

BHAVNA SONI

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

It was for nothing that the government had launched the Jal Shakti Abhiyan in May 2019. With water being a community resource, it was important that 'jan shakti' translated into 'jal shakti' through asset creation and rainwater harvesting. The campaign was called 'catch the rain'.

The Central Groundwater Board of India reckons that about 17% of groundwater blocks are overexploited (rate of extraction exceeds the rate of recharge of an aquifer) while five per cent and 14% blocks are at critical and semi-critical stages respectively. Despite myriad government efforts, the story of conserving groundwater is far from satisfactory.

Talking to Expressions, Kanti (22), a single parent of a two-year-old girl from the backwaters of Shaktinagar and a house maid, said, "We have to fill buckets from the manually operated pump and sometimes government installed taps which provide water around 6 in morning and again between 3-4 pm so that we store water sufficiently." She also mentioned how cautiously they used water because at times the supply was not

regular and they had to turn to their owner for water supply. She added, "People who are affluent do not know the hardships faced by us people so they waste water and we face the repercussions as the only source of water for us is the ground water."

It is noteworthy that 9% of multi-storey housing societies and 70% of commercial users, comprising hotels, hospitals, schools, offices and malls, are dependent on groundwater. They extract groundwater through private borewells; 60 per cent of these borewells are more than 200 feet deep!

Given such water stress, the Jal Shakti Abhiyan has witnessed significant participation, covering 1,592 blocks in 256 water-stressed districts. Approximately 1.29 crore water-related works have been undertaken. But numerous areas are still left untouched. A survey conducted on residents of various areas of Lucknow showed how most of them despite having their own houses are not taking precautions when it comes to conserving water. From the responses collected 80% respondents own houses in which hardly 24.4% experience water shortage.

Despite various water conservation schemes the survey findings indicate that people are lacking awareness towards Jal Jeevan Mission, Jal Shakti Abhiyan, Amrit Sarovar Scheme etc. While 88.9% of

people are aware of rainwater harvesting system hardly 15.6% of them have such setup installed rest 84.4 do not follow any measure to conserve the rainwater which could eventually help in recharging the ground water levels if taken care of.

Respondents said the government lacked proper implementation measures and strict laws. It is interesting to know that a household has the capacity to store up to 80,000 litres of water per year and therefore a small step of installing rooftop rainwater harvesting cannot entirely solve the problem but at least this can be a baby step towards recharge of groundwater level. ■



Pictures: BHAVNA SONI

Financial literacy vital for youth empowerment

SRISHTI MISHRA

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

The National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) states in a 2020 study that only three per cent of Indian young adults are financially literate. Additionally, majority of youngsters learn about money management from their parents or peers rather than from schools or financial institutions.

As multiple studies have tried to examine the level of financial literacy in India, they conclude that financial literacy in the country is lacking. Reasons that are responsible for this financial illiteracy are that there are very few good tracking systems that can help youngsters reach their

financial goals more quickly or they lack financial management skills.

In a survey conducted by companies Momspresso and Muvin, they analysed responses of 600 youngsters studying in classes 7th to 12th and their parents. The survey found that 94 per cent of parents believe that their children are inclined toward learning financial solutions and digital payments through several mechanisms. The irony is that one-fifth of the world's population resides in India and about 30% of its citizens are financially literate.

Further stats reveal that 16.7% of Indian youngsters achieve an average passing score on the Financial Literacy Championship while 45% of students have no idea how to make a budget, and 60% of

students have no idea what investments are, how risk and reward work. On subjects including budgeting, investments, diversification, and the risk to return of investments, more than 50% of the students had below average scores.

This financial illiteracy is also because financial education is not included in the curriculum. There is also scarcity of resources to promote financial education in schools, such as textbooks and teaching aids. Culturally, too, open discussions about money are considered taboo.

Thus, what is needed is a solid understanding of personal finance that will help youngsters make right decisions about their career paths, negotiate for better salaries and plan for retirement. ■

Ads: Selling style to inspire BRANDS

AMBIKA SINGH

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Father of advertising David Ogilvy is remembered to have remarked that the 'best ideas come as jokes. Make your thinking as funny as possible'. What Ogilvy intended to convey was the fact that if the ad script was catchy, the advertisement would resonate with the audience.

In order to understand what made certain advertisements more popular than others, Expressions talked to individuals to grasp this fact.

Faculty member at Amity School of Communication (ASCO) Shivanshu Pathak shared his favourite advertisement from Cadbury Dairy Milk, one of the most beloved and innovative brands. He told Expressions that 'kuch meetha ho jaye' campaign released in 2012 was truly novel. What intrigued Pathak was the ad's ironic twist where it portrayed a family scene in which a girl was caught running away with her lover, only for her family to appear suddenly. Instead of scolding her, her father offers her a Dairy Milk chocolate, saying the line "Subah kaam karne se phele kuch meetha ho jaye" This advertisement struck a chord with Pathak because it subverted societal expectations.

Vidhika Bhatnagar, a student at Amity School of Languages, mentioned her favourite advertisement from Oreo, a popular biscuit brand. The specific ad that captured her attention was the "Oreo: Bubbles of Play" (released in 2019). What made this advertisement stand out for her was its nostalgic impact, highlighting the

bond between a father and his daughter. Since Vidhika shares a close relationship with her own father, the ad stirred up memories of her own childhood experiences with him.

When asked about his favourite advertisement, Dev Kapoor, a startup founder in Lucknow of a fashion brand, said that he was impressed by the Parle-G ad titled 'roko mat toko mat' released in 2016. According to him the advertisement had an appeal of emotional bonding, with inspiration. In his opinion the advertisement has a message that asks parents to enable children to be inquisitive and open to exploring and learning. Parle G is a very popular brand since the last 100 years.

Moreover, the advertisement from Hindustan Unilever, a well-known brand in the fast-moving consumer goods industry 'The Shower' (released on December 20, 2018) delivers a powerful message about water scarcity in desert regions by depicting how an arid Indian village reacts when a shower cubicle suddenly appears one morning. Hindustan Unilever reminded people about the importance of conserving water. The advertisement made history by becoming the first Indian ad to win a National Award. Hindustan Unilever's message is clear: we all have a role to play in making positive changes, even if they seem small.

Hence, these personal accounts reveal the power of advertising to evoke emotions, challenge societal norms, and convey important messages. Each ad resonates uniquely with individuals, highlighting the diverse ways in which commercials can leave a lasting impact on audiences. ■



"The Shower"

Ambika Singh was inspired by the emotional and compelling appeal to do something good for society.



"Oreo: Bubbles of play"

Vidhika Bhatnagar related to the ad as it added nostalgia.



Cadbury daily milk Kuch Meetha Ho jaye (Shubh Arambh)

Mr. Shivanshu Pathak liked the ironical element of his advertisement.



Pictures: AMBIKA SINGH

"Parle-G Roko Mat Toko"

Dev Kapoor was touched by the emotional bonding shown in the advertisement.



Pictures: DIVYA KOTWANI

Around 100 families, mostly from the Mallah or boatmen community, were displaced from Khidkiya Ghat, Varanasi, between October and December 2020 after the Union government decided to spruce up the stretch between Khidkiya Ghat and Raj Ghat under the Smart Cities Mission.

Many businesses men lost their shops in 2012-13, and not been provided a single amount of compensation money.

Development in, compensation out!

DIVYA KOTWANI

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Businessman Bhanu Yadav is a man of grit and determination. Despite all odds that come his way, he has fought his way through them and succeeded. Till date nothing has broken his spirit. But government indifference to his plight has taken its toll and Yadav has surrendered to fate.

Running a small shop for the last 13-14 years, this businessman from Varanasi told Expressions, "My shop isn't just my livelihood; it's a lifeline for seven to eight other families too. Knowing that we are not only feeding our own family but also helping others put food on the table fills me with immense joy."

Elaborating, he said, to set up his shop, he took a loan of nearly Rs 10 lakh. He added that he drew tremendous satisfaction and pride that his business provided a good life for his family.

However, his world turned upside down when some government officials informed him that his shop would be demolished soon to make way for road expansion. The news shattered him, catapulting him back 13 years ago when he ran a modest shop,

which sustained his family and filled their days with contentment. Life flowed smoothly until the ominous visit from officials promising progress at the cost of his humble abode.

With heavy heart he watched his daughter's birthday overshadowed by the demolition of his cherished shop.

The cruelest and most heart-wrenching aspect was government indifference – he was not offered any compensation. He was left deprived of his livelihood and justice. But, as he was a determined man, he took a fresh loan, secured a new plot and reset up his shop.

But goddess Fortuna had other plans for him as again his shop was crucified at the altar of development. Comments Juli Yadav, wife of Yadav, "Instead of shattering the very backbone of communities by taking away their livelihood, the government should look for some other alternatives for road expansion fostering resilience rather than vulnerability."

Locality residents say in that neighborhood, it's not just one shop at stake, but the livelihoods of around 50 people who have been part of that community for years. They add that it is unjust for the government to simply announce their demolitions within weeks, disregarding the impact on citizens and not even providing any compensation amount. ■

Man's best friend turns foe?

ASHKA JAIN

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

It was only recently that a case of pet dog attack came to light in New Delhi. Reports stated that a Pitbull attacked a seven-year old child who was playing outside her house. In another similar episode a seven-year-old girl was attacked by an American Bully while she was playing near her home in the Shahbad Dairy area.

In a third case a Pitbull snatched an 18-month-old infant from her grandfather's lap and mauled her in Burari's Utarakhand Colony.

With such frequent pet dog attacks on children and people being reported, the Center has issued an advisory to various state governments recommending a ban on sale, breeding and import of 23 dog breeds deemed a threat to public safety. Pitbulls, Rottweilers and some Shepherd breeds are on the list.

However, as dog owners argue temperament depends on training and socialization, not breed, the move has

sparked a debate in society as to what is correct. Expressions carried out a survey among dog owners and almost 40% respondents agreed that if their pet were attacking someone then they should be the one held accountable.

Many respondents opined that temperament is shaped by environment, not breed. They also added that even as various news channels are filled with stories of irresponsible ownership, dogs kept on leash and neglected, root causes like strict breeder regulations and mandatory training for owners should be addressed. They said Maharashtra tops the chart with almost 4.35 lakh incidents being reported. However, Karnataka, on the other hand, was strictly against it, they said. The Karnataka High Court, quashed the ban while highlighting the need for stricter enforcement of existing laws. Respondents said the advisory, though flawed, served as a wakeup call as it highlighted an urgent need for strict pet ownership regulations.

Talking to Expressions Ahana Kulshreshtha a mass communication student and a dog owner herself, said tempera-

ment was not a breed characteristic but rather a consequence of upbringing.

As India navigates this complex issue, the future of human-canine relationship hinges on finding the right balance. Can public safety be ensured without unfairly demonizing breeds? Can responsible ownership practices be fostered to create a future where dogs, regardless of breed, can thrive as cherished companions? ■



Picture: ASHKA JAIN

ALUMNI CORNER

ASCO empowers students to become professionals



SHREYANSH PRIYAM

Young Professional
Ministry of Info. & Brod. (GoI)
BJ&MC - 2012-15

Amity School of Communication (ASCO) was more than just lectures and textbooks to me. It was an unforgettable journey that helped me become a professional that I am today. Throughout my stay at ASCO, I experienced educators like Professor Johri who were devoted to their craft. Dr Johri exemplified the institute's emphasis on practical learning. The institute's stress on real-world application is demonstrated by student

participation in projects such as market research and electronic media simulations, which bridge the gap between theory and industry requirements.

ASCO encouraged students to excel in their academic pursuits and fostered talent beyond boundaries of traditional academia. Through active encouragement of extracurricular activities, such as participation in theatre plays, ASCO instilled in me confidence and skills like public speaking —

assets that have proven invaluable in the professional world.

One standout moment in my academic journey was the Indian Political System course, which not only deepened my understanding of governance but also ignited a passion for societal impact. The professor's adeptness at connecting theory to real-world examples continues to inspire and drive my work at the ministry.

Furthermore, ASCO provided numerous opportunities to interact with industry professionals, offering insights into real-world practices and challenges.

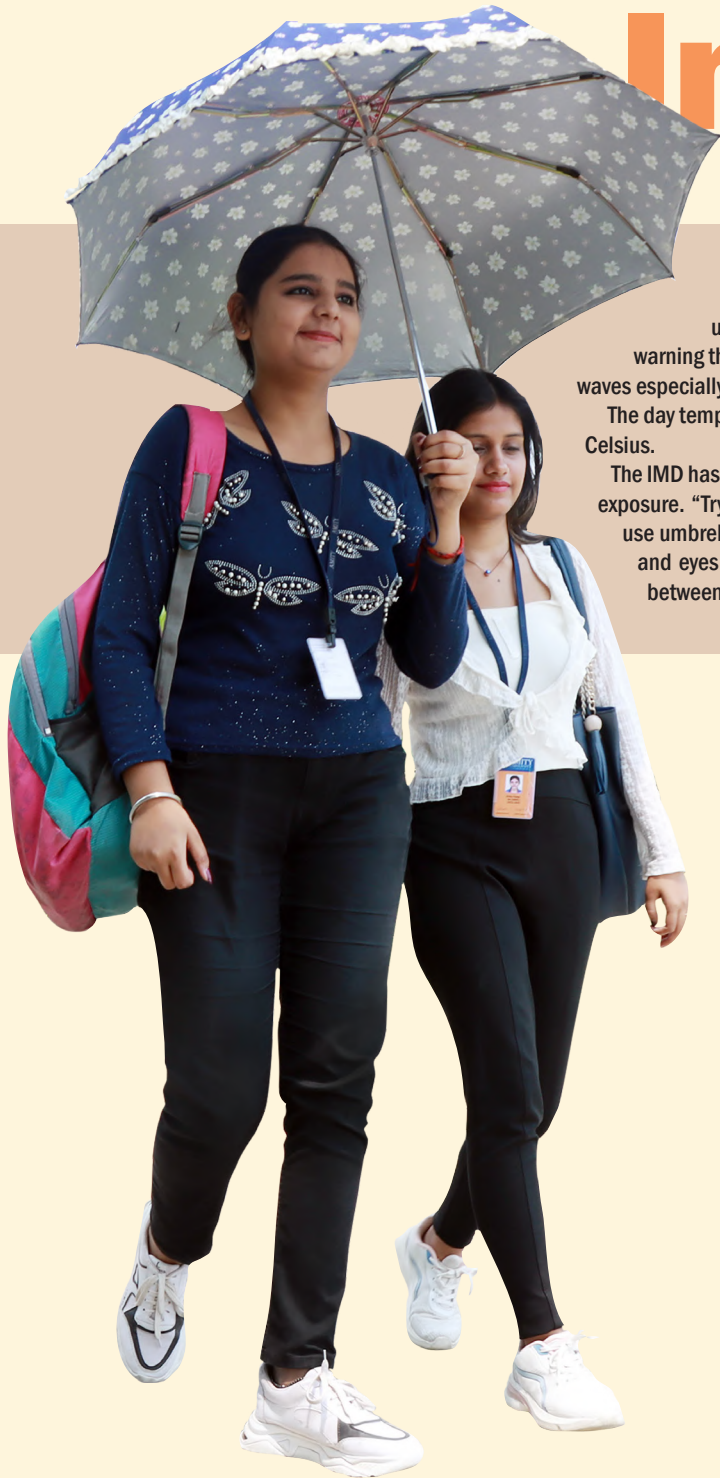
In conclusion, ASCO empowers you with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to thrive in your chosen career. I would suggest the current batch to seize the opportunity to learn from the wealth of experience offered by your esteemed professors. Do not hesitate to participate in extracurricular activities, as they provide a platform to develop valuable skills that complement your academic foundation. ASCO equips you; it is up to you to leverage these resources to their fullest potential. Embrace the opportunities presented, and embark on a rewarding path to success. ■

Indian plains sizzle

The plains of northern India are experiencing unprecedented heatwave conditions with IMD warning that the 'country this year will witness prolonged heat waves especially between April and June'.

The day temperature is already hovering between 40-44 degrees Celsius.

The IMD has advised people to take all precautions to avoid heat exposure. "Try to wear cotton, light-colored light weight clothes, use umbrella, hat, sunglasses, and a cloth to protect your skin and eyes from the sunscreen. Avoid roaming out in the sun between 12 noon and 3 pm," says the advisory.



FAREWELL 2024

Begums & Nawabs take centerstage



Pictures: SURESH SAHU



MANI RANI

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Amity School of Communication's (ASCO) farewell celebration was more than just a standard farewell party; it was a lavish occasion infused with charm, grace, and the regal atmosphere of 'Begums and Nawabs.'

'Begums and Nawabs' set the tone for the evening, turning the campus into a scene from a page of history. The sound of laughing and enthusiasm filled the halls as students arrived at the location, decked in elaborate needlework, costly silks, and traditional jewellery. The atmosphere was charged with excitement as each participant was keen to showcase his / her outfit.

Mani Rani, Kashish Khan and Khushi Gulati were the evening's captivating

anchors; they skillfully took the audience through different emotions that pervaded the space.

The evening kicked off with a mesmerizing opening dance performance by Yashesvi Chauhan from MAMM-2 evoking a world of charm and elegance with her elegant movements. Her performance created the perfect atmosphere for a memorable evening full of fun and festivities.

The fashion parade, where students displayed their originality and sense of flair via their renditions of Begum and Nawab costumes, was without a doubt the evening's high point. Every piece of clothing, from elaborately embroidered sherwanis and elaborate anarkalis to flowing dupattas, was a tribute to India's rich cultural past.

In between the performances, a fun-filled guessing game added an element

of excitement to the proceedings. Seniors had to guess which song their juniors had dedicated to them, which sparked giggles and nostalgic moments as treasured memories were relived.

The BJMC-2 batch's final dance performance was one of the evening's highlights; their synchronized movement and contagious energy had everyone in the audience screaming. Their performance served as a worthy homage to the relationships that have been developed over time and as proof of the class's energy.

However, in addition to their degree, the students left their alma mater with a wealth of memories and experiences that would influence their future travels.

And they went out into the world knowing that they would always carry a little piece of Amity School of Communication in their hearts, no matter where life brought them. ■

It's now time for Mr Mom to take over

ARHAMA ALI

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Whether it was an interview with househusband Atul Agnihotri on Satyamev Jayate by Aamir Khan or role reversal of Arjun Kapoor as househusband and Kareena Kapoor as family provider in film 'Ki and Ka', this concept is now becoming very popular in India. Yet, to a large segment of society in the country, it is still taboo.

With women being visualized as caregivers and men being the family providers, it is still very difficult for a conservative society to accept role reversal. A stereotypical society has made many believe that women are the main and natural caregivers, and men are not. Well, it is true that being a man can also be hard and if a man chooses to be a househusband, there are chances that he will be hardly respected.

Still, this concept is now being accepted in modern day society. This is happening because both partners are now equally aware of the family needs and support each other when it comes to taking care of kids at home.

Talking to Expressions, Afreen Aziz says, "My husband is extremely proud of my accomplishments, and he's never been embarrassed about my success. I am a chartered accountant by profession, and got married a few months back." Anika Khan. Adds, "My husband comes from a good family which has a business. He always encourages me to do well in my field. If I take any tension regarding household work, he helps me out. The only thing I've heard from him is excitement about my success. I have seen a few ladies commenting as they could not bear it. Be it their brother or friend, they can't see them working or helping in household chores, holding their wives' handbags."

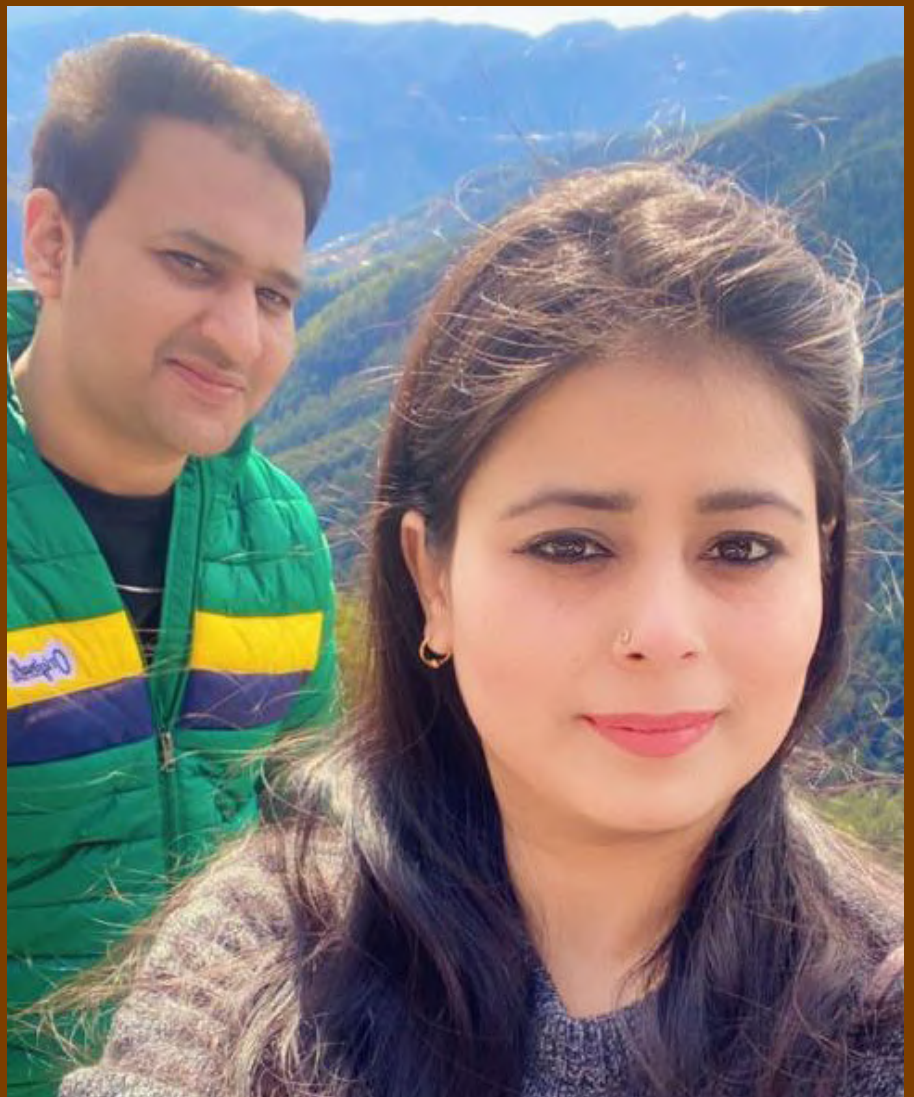
"Daniyal, my husband, stands as my greatest supporter. He's never once felt overshadowed by my success. As a successful lawyer breaking barriers in my field, yet, it's the partnership I share with

Daniyal that epitomizes true progress," Iram Yousuf adds.

"Rithvik, my husband, is my anchor, resonating with countless modern couples. His unwavering support has never wavered. As a successful businesswoman pioneering in my industry, charting new paths. Yet, it's the bond I share with Rithvik that truly distinguishes us," says Aradhana Saxena. Many young couples

agree that the world is changing and accepting role reversal is now a natural thing. Safiya Ali adds, "

"I am an engineer by profession, and I got married to Asif five years ago. Still, my eyes sparkle with admiration for him. For Asif, being a househusband isn't about sacrificing his ambitions; it's about prioritizing our partnership and supporting my career aspirations." ■



Laith Abu-Taleb is a 28-year-old gender equality activist and tech entrepreneur from Jordan. A youth mobilization specialist for UN Women's Arab States regional office, he believes that integrating the unique knowledge and experience of young people into the tech sphere is a powerful way to drive not only technological innovation but also social progress. Laith is the co-founder of Arabic HeForShe, a movement to engage men in the fight for gender equality, and the co-developer of WeRise, a UN Women-supported app that promotes women's empowerment through gamification. says, UN WOMEN.

Picture: ARHAMA ALI

City's iconic global export - biryani

AISHANI PURKAYASTHA

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

An integral part of Awadhi cuisine, Lucknowi Biryani is one dish that should not be missed by the palate. Believed to be inspired by last Nawab of Lucknow Wajed Ali Shah, biryani is the centerpiece for a family reunion during Ramzan.

Mohammad Munir Ali, a worker at Tunday in Aminabad, biryani means a way to bond with family on Eid. He told Expressions, "I used to watch my ammi cook it as a kid and now, I cook biryani for my kids every year on Eid. I hardly get to go to my village in Unnao, but this is one time of the year when I do go. I am happy to see my kids happy with my creation."

A two-minute rickshaw ride from Qaisarbagh Chauraha takes one to the gali of biryani, right from Tunday to Shakeel to Alamgir to Wahid. The aroma of spices is mesmerizing. It is a highly competitive lane. Interestingly, Shakeel, which serves chicken biryani and is located inside a very narrow lane is highly popular and preferred despite being neighbors with a towering Tunday Kababi. The location doesn't seem to bother customers at all. While their shop itself is quite old, it has become more popular particularly in the last couple of years, owing to its coverage by food bloggers and its inexpensive prices. Alamgir, too, is located in a similar location like Shakeel and they too have very high demand amongst customers, especially for their mutton biryani. And the bustle gets even louder during the holy month as shops remain open all night long, up until sehri. "We don't get much sleep during this time par phir bhi itni thakaan mehsoos nahi hoti. We make biryani all year long but cooking it during Ramzan gives a different sense of joy," says Noor Alam, working at Wahid Biryani. The best part is there is no sense of bitter competition amongst any of them. There's no 'arey yaha aa jaayiye, yaha khaaiye' reaching one's ears.



Pictures: AISHANI PURKAYASTHA

●●● IDRIS BIRYANI STORY ●●●

Established in 1968 by Mohammad Idris, and currently being run by his sons, Idris Biryani is perhaps one of the most loved in this line of business. What sets them apart is how they have not forgotten their roots. The shop looks rather semi built, with no fancy decor or furniture. Everything is cooked in the open, but with a lot of hygiene, in deghs. They use earthen chulhas and coal for their cooking. Biryani, in general, is very weighty on the palate, but since Idris Biryani is not spice-heavy and rather relies on the actual taste of the meat, one doesn't feel over full after indulging in a plate of it. But beyond their respect for their roots, their father's vision, and their simplicity, there's

something else, too, that makes Idris distinguishable from others. Their acts of service and kindness. Since its inception, Idris has been quietly serving the residents of that area, never once making a big deal out of it. And not cold left-overs, but freshly cooked, steaming plate of food. It's said that once a worker had served cold kulchas to an old lady, seeing which, he was scolded by Abu Bakr, son of Mohammad Idris, and he immediately made him serve fresh kulcha to the old lady. It is after they finish serving the needy that they start serving the queue of patiently waiting customers. They have truly understood the essence of food- a common need connecting us all together.

Beyond this biryani lane, the biryani saga stretches into the area of Akbari Gate, and Ghantaghar is buzzing with several make-shift stalls during this month. Small store owners, most of whom come here especially during this time from smaller towns or villages to earn more money, might not have a big name but serve the right taste. People

who indulge in feasting here, also are often seen donating a plate of biryani amongst other delights, to the underprivileged, too.

The interesting factor is that these stalls are generational. Right from learning to cook right to serving it well is what these stall owners have learnt from their ancestors. ■

Lok Sabha 2024

Welfarism tops poll agenda

The Legislative assembly elections in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim will be held simultaneously with the general election, along with the by-elections for 35 seats among 16 states.

ABHINAV VERMA

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

This 18th edition of the poll saga of India holds special interest as PM Modi is contesting to return to power for the third time. With the political landscape simmering with anticipation and speculation, a survey by Expressions offers insights into the pulse of the people.

The survey, spanning urban demographics across Lucknow, reveals a nuanced tapestry of perspectives, reflecting both optimism and apprehension among the electorate. Among the myriad factors influencing voter sentiment, key issues such as economic revival, social welfare, and national security have emerged as focal points, resonating deeply with citizens grappling with the aftermath of a tumultuous period marked by the global pandemic and its socioeconomic ramifications.

Economic resurgence stands out as a paramount concern for a significant portion of respondents, who view job creation, inflation control, and sustainable growth as linchpins of the nation's recov-

18TH LOK SABHA ELECTIONS	
DATE	Apr 19-Jun 1
COUNTING ON	4th June
TOTAL MEMBERS	543
ELIGIBLE VOTERS	960 million
RAJYA SABHA SEATES	65
BY-ELECTIONS	35 seats

(Source: CNN, Sat 16 March 2024)

ery trajectory. Voters are keenly scrutinizing political promises and policy agendas aimed at bolstering India's economic resilience.

Speaking to Expressions, expert Dr ACP Tripathi, professor of Political Science said, "Technology has overdriven the way of thinking of the mass. Daily they watch ads, which are surrogate in nature, that promote the agendas of various political parties, so the voters must thoroughly research, must understand the crucial elements of the Indian politics and then should contribute their role in upholding the democratic principles of the nation." On the note of how voters should be wary of misinformation in this era of information Tripathi stressed, "Practical based thinking should be focused on and one must cross reference the facts from various authentic sources."

Equally pivotal are issues pertaining to social welfare and inclusivity, with citizens emphasizing the importance of healthcare accessibility, education reform, and poverty alleviation measures. Amidst persistent challenges in healthcare infrastructure and educational disparities exacerbated by the digital divide, voters are

demanding substantive reforms and tangible progress towards building a more equitable society where every citizen can thrive.

Furthermore, the survey underscores the role of regional dynamics and local governance issues in shaping electoral dynamics, with voters expressing varying degrees of satisfaction with incumbent administrations and aspirational aspirations for change at the grassroots level. From infrastructural development to law and order concerns, the electorate's verdict on local governance performance is poised to influence electoral outcomes in numerous constituencies across the country.

Amidst the cacophony of political rhetoric and campaign fervor, the survey paints a mosaic of diverse aspirations, apprehensions, and expectations that underscore the vibrancy of India's democratic ethos. In the crucible of democracy, where every vote is a testament to the aspirations of millions, verdict of the electorate will not only shape the contours of political power but also resonate as a reflection of India's evolving societal fabric and its quest for a brighter tomorrow. ■



Embracing traditional Chikankari



Chikankari embroidery has the potential to be innovative and modernised in order to adapt to shifting consumer demands. This can entail keeping the embroidery's classic aesthetic appeal while introducing fresh patterns, materials, and techniques.”

(House of Chikankari)

MOLLY SINGH

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

It's that time of the year again when the sun is ablaze and demand for Lucknawi chikankari is soaring like the daytime heat.

Chikankari, an artistry steeped in Lucknawi tradition has enthralled generations with its warp and weft. It came to the country during the 17th Century. Talking to Expressions, Malti Sharma, a chikankari aficionado from Lucknow says, "During summer season, I shop for chikankari kurtis as they are comfortable to wear and elegant at the same time."

Owing to its popularity, the automated Chikankari has emerged surprisingly more than the exquisite hand-stitched Chikankari.

The expansion of automated Chikankari industry is now bearing heavily on the craft and craftsmen. "People come

and tell us that we find similar articles at cheaper rates at local stores or online, they try to bargain which actually breaks our heart because we put in a lot of efforts and patience in curating each and every clothing item," says Irfan Ahmed, a fourth generation Chikankari artisan. In the realm of textile industry, the artisanal value of Chikankari is unmatched to that of the machine made Chikankari.

The side streets of the Raja Bazaar Area in Chowk, are filled with shops that are unnamed but sustain the authenticity and the spirit of traditional hand-made chikankari. "Whenever I come to Lucknow, I specially visit Chowk to buy Chikankari kurtis and sarees in bulk to gift them to my friends in Bengaluru. I have been a fan of the traditional hand stitched Chikankari since my college days," said Mamta Bharat, a regular customer of Iqbal Chikan shop in Chowk. She says authentic Chikankari is also superior in terms of the variety it has to offer, no

two Chikankari embroideries would ever be same. She adds that the best way to distinguish an authentic chikan work from a machine made one is to see if the threads in the interior of the garments are well stitched or rather messy. The messier it is, more authentic is the work.

"We spend hours working on chikan embroidery, and then put a price that does our hardwork some sort of justice, but it's not all profit-oriented. In return, the customers also get good quality long-lasting authentic chikan clothing but instead they run behind dupes because they're cheaper," said Malti Devi, a Chikankari artist who has been in this line since she was 12 years old.

But there is light at the end of the tunnel. Some legitimate shops and organisations continue to support and uphold the authenticity of the hand stitched and dyed Chikankari. Their efforts will go a long way in preserving and promoting the legacy of handmade Chikankari. ■